

# Downtown Lincoln Parking Study

Lincoln, Nebraska

August 2001

**Prepared for:  
City of Lincoln**



**In Conjunction With:**



**KIRKHAM MICHAEL  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS**

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Downtown Lincoln Association  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
State of Nebraska, D.A.S. Building Division  
County-City Building Commission

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## **Introduction**

### ***Purpose***

This report examines the existing and future parking conditions in the downtown area of Lincoln, Nebraska. The purpose of this report is to provide an accurate inventory, identify current deficiencies, explore the effects that the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) has on parking demand in the downtown area, and to identify possible solutions including recommendations for future improvements. This report was prepared under a contract with the City of Lincoln, for their use as well as the Downtown Lincoln Association, the University of Nebraska, County-City Building Commission, and the State of Nebraska, Building Division of the Department of Administrative Services (DAS).

### ***Project Location***

The proposed study location is in central Lincoln. It consists of two study areas, the approximately 135 square block Downtown Area and the approximately 140 square block UNL Area. In addition the Downtown area contains two sub-areas, the 18 square block Haymarket sub-area, and the 29 square block Capitol sub-area. The study area boundaries can be seen in Figure 1.

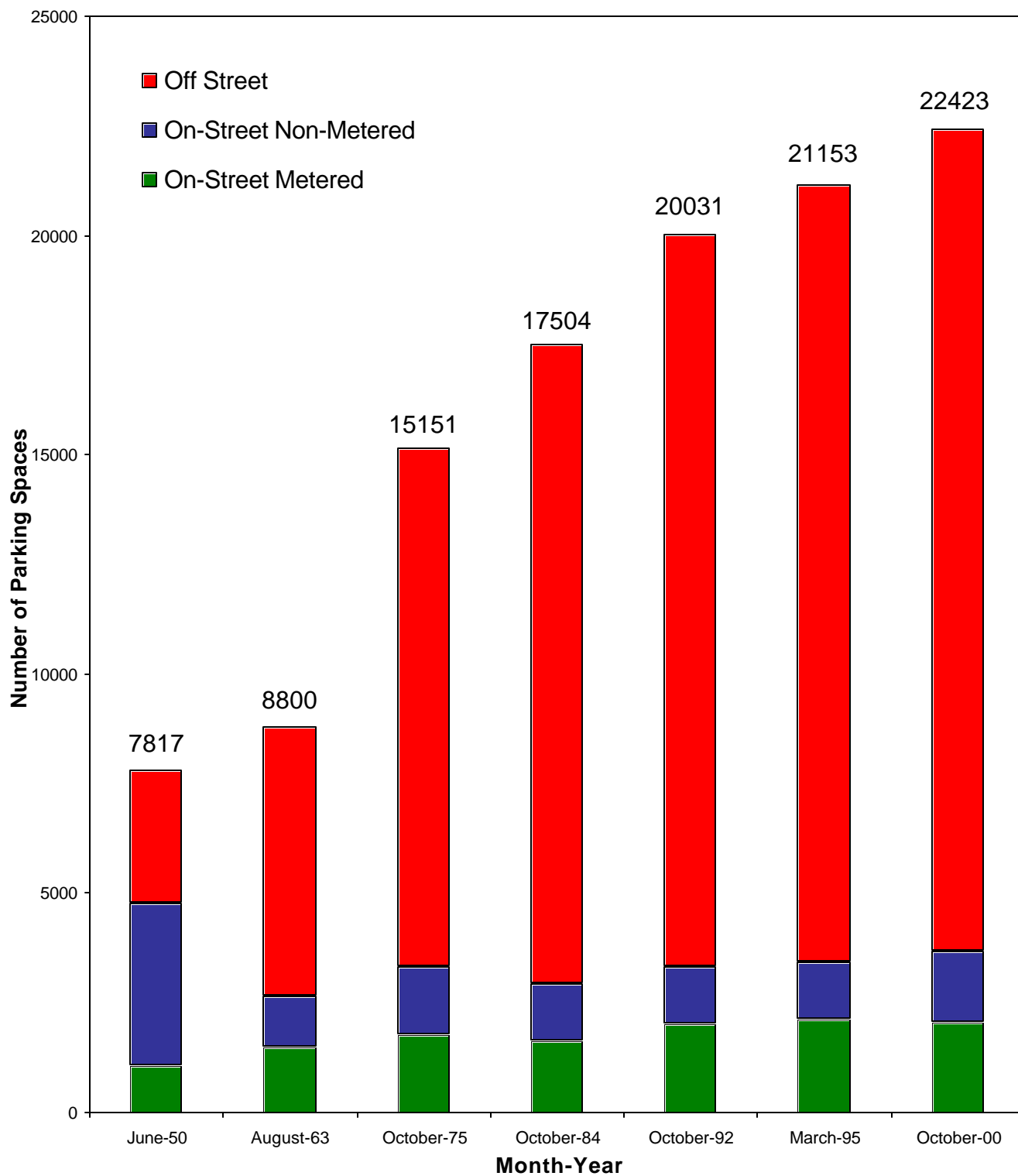
### ***History***

In 1993, a detailed parking study was performed by the City of Lincoln Transportation Department. Since that study, the Downtown has reaffirmed itself as a major employment/entertainment center with specialty retail and housing support. Figure 2 shows the parking supply trend in Downtown Lincoln over the past 50 years. The trend towards more off-street parking, which began 25 years ago, has continued in recent years.

In the fall of 2000, the City of Lincoln contracted with the UNL Student Chapter of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) to conduct a detailed inventory and occupancy survey of all parking spaces located within the study area. In addition, the occupancy of the Capitol sub-area was again surveyed during the spring of 2001.

Since the 1993 study, many changes have been made to the Downtown parking supply. These include the construction of the Que Place, Market Place, and Carriage Park garages. These changes resulted in an increase of 1,890 spaces. Table 1 shows a list of 10 major changes since the 1993 study. Another change that is not mentioned in Table 1 is the study boundaries. These have been expanded slightly to account for the growing downtown and UNL areas of influence.

*Figure 1-Study Area Boundaries*



**Figure 2**  
**Total Parking Supply in**  
**Downtown Lincoln**

**Table 1-Major Changes in Parking Supply**

Block Number	Net Change in Parking	Reason
<u>Increases</u>		
75	+246	Addition to the StarTran lots and surrounding on-street parking
70	+297	Addition of two levels to the state garage
13	+364	Net gain due to the construction of the Market Place garage
15	+668	Net gain due to the construction of the Que Place garage and addition
82	+156	Addition of one level to the state garage
67	+611	Net gain due to the construction of the Carriage Park garage
<u>Decreases</u>		
3	-269	Closure of the Haymarket lot for the Journal Star building
16	-189	Closure of lot for the Swanson Russell building/ Gunny's garage construction
9	-223	Closure of lot for construction of the new UNL garage
14	-281	Closure of lot for construction of Embassy Suites



## Existing Parking Conditions

### ***Parking Inventory***

The first task in updating the Downtown Parking study was to update the inventory of on- and off-street parking spaces. A detailed inventory was provided by ITE and is summarized in Table 2 with the corresponding numbers from the 1993 study.

**Table 2-Downtown Parking Supply**

Year	Actual Parking Supply			
	On-Street	Off-Street		Total
		Public	Private/Patron	
2000	3,906	4,080	14,437	22,423
1993	3,261	2,530	14,210	20,001

The primary increases are noted in the on-street and public off-street supplies.

It is important to note that of the 22,423 spaces, 941 are due to the expanded study area. Of these, 219 are from on-street facilities and 722 are from off-street private/patron facilities. A detailed breakdown of the inventory can be found in the Appendix.

An inventory of the Haymarket sub-area was also provided. It is important to note that these spaces are not in addition to the stalls above. They are merely the stalls located within the Haymarket sub-area. A summary can be seen in Table 3. The decrease in public off-street parking reflects a shift in privately owned facilities from individual monthly leases to block leases committed to specific building tenants. This is also reflected in the increase in private/patron parking. Of the 2,879 stalls, 205 private/patron spaces are due to the expanded study area. A detailed breakdown can be found in the Appendix.

**Table 3-Haymarket Parking Supply**

Year	Actual Parking Supply			
	On-Street	Off-Street		Total
		Public	Private/Patron	
2000	624	743	1,512	2,879
1995	524	868	977	2,369

## **Existing Parking Demand**

The following section identifies the current parking demand, including the effects of the state legislature and pedestrians parking outside of the study boundaries. This section also takes a separate look at the Haymarket sub-area and it's related demand.

### **Downtown Study Area**

The parking occupancies in the Downtown area were measured during three separate times by ITE. The times were 10:00 AM, 12:00 PM, and 2:00 PM. These values were then combined with those found in the Capitol sub-area and along the southern boundary to determine the Downtown area's peak parking demand. The results can be seen in Table 7 and Figure 3. A detailed breakdown of the individual blocks can be found in the Appendix.

**Table 7-Downtown Parking Demand**

Year	Total Number of Occupied Stalls		
	10:00 AM	12:00 PM	2:00 PM
2000	15,710	15,305	15,527
1993	15,323	14,788	15,096

As shown above, the peak parking demand occurs at 10:00 AM. Of the 22,423 parking stalls in the Downtown area, 15,710 were occupied. This shows that during the peak parking period, in the year 2000 at 10:00 AM, there were 6,713 empty spaces in Downtown Lincoln. It is also of note that, of the 941 stalls located in the expanded study area, 520 were occupied.

### **Capitol Sub-Area**

In determining the peak parking demand, it was thought that the state legislature might have an effect on the parking demand. For this reason, a specialized study was performed in the Capitol Sub-Area to measure the effects. This was accomplished by measuring parking demand while the legislature was both in and out of session. The results of the in-session and out-of-session demands can be found in Tables 4 and 5 respectively. A detailed breakdown of the demands can be found in the Appendix.

**Table 4-Capitol Sub-Area – Legislature In-Session**

Total Number of Occupied Stalls		
10:00 AM	12:00 PM	2:00 PM
3,751	3,451	3,708

**Table 5-Capitol Sub-Area – Legislature Out-of-Session**

Total Number of Occupied Stalls		
10:00 AM	12:00 PM	2:00 PM
3,385	2,966	3,211

*Figure 3-Downtown Unadjusted Parking Surplus/Deficiency*

As shown in Tables 4 and 5, the legislature does increase the parking demand by approximately 350 to 500 spaces while in-session. Therefore, when determining the peak parking demand for the entire downtown area, in-session occupancy rates were used for blocks within the capitol sub-area. A block by block distribution can be found in the Appendix.

### **South Boundary Study**

In addition to surveying the number of occupied stalls, it was felt that some of the Downtown area's demand was being satisfied outside of the study boundaries. In particular, it was felt that this was occurring along the southern boundary as employees and visitors utilized on-street parking outside of the study boundaries and walked to places such as the Capitol and County-City Building.

To determine the frequency of this occurrence, counts were taken of parkers walking into the study area. These counts were taken at 6 locations along the southern boundaries. The number of occupied spaces was then estimated using the average auto occupancy rates provided by the Lincoln Public Works Department. This demand was then applied to immediately adjacent blocks. The results of this can be seen in Table 6.

**Table 6-External Demand**

	Block Number					
	105	107	109	111	112	221
Number of Pedestrians	15	67	54	122	95	118
Number of Occupied Stalls	12	56	45	103	80	100

### **Haymarket Sub-Area**

The Downtown area is unique due to its variety of land uses. Some of these land uses have overlapping parking demands while others have non-concurrent parking peaks. This is particularly true in the Haymarket. For this reason, it was felt that additional time periods should be included for this area. The additional times surveyed were Friday at 7:00 PM and Friday at 9:00 PM. The results are shown in Table 8 below. A block by block distribution can be found in the Appendix.

**Table 8-Haymarket Sub-Area Parking Demand**

Total Number of Occupied Stalls				
10:00 AM	12:00 PM	2:00 PM	7:00 PM	9:00 PM
1,463	1,592	1,551	1,225	1,201

The peak parking demand is at 12:00 PM, with 1,592 vehicles parked, of which, 75 were due to the expanded study area. Although the Friday evening demands are less than the noon demand, the supply is also significantly reduced on weekends and evenings. This reduction in supply was due primarily to institutional or artificial barriers. Many off-

street parking lots are under utilized at night and on weekends because they are not made available to the general public. This places a heavier burden on the on-street parking supply, which is not likely to increase significantly. The first step to increasing the supply of parking in the Downtown area should be to eliminate, to the extent possible, barriers preventing the public from utilizing existing off-street parking spaces.

### ***Adjusted Parking Supply***

It is not reasonable to assume that all of the parking spaces shown in Figure 3 are available to the general public. Many of the spaces are designated Handicapped Only or are private/patron parking limited to employees or customers of a specific business. In order to determine the actual number of available spaces to the general public, it was necessary to examine each parking facility individually and determine whether it provides public parking or private/patron parking.

To accomplish this empty spaces in Handicapped Only stalls or in Private/Patron parking lots were not counted as surplus parking, even though they were empty.

It is also not practical to assume the capacity of on-street or off-street public parking is 100%. The general industry standard for capacity of a public parking facility is 90%. Therefore, each of the on-street block faces and the off-street public parking lots were assumed to have a practical capacity of 90% of the physical parking supply.

The adjusted parking supply is depicted in Table 9 for the Downtown area and Table 10 for the Haymarket sub-area.

**Table 9-Downtown Adjusted Parking Supply**

Year	On-Street	Off-Street		Total Supply	Total Demand	Adjusted Surplus/Deficiencies
		Public	Private/Patron			
2000	3,384	3,664	10,124	17,172	15,710	+1,462
1993	2,877	2,274	10,593	15,744	15,323	+421

**Table 10-Haymarket Sub-Area Adjusted Parking Supply**

Year	On-Street	Off-Street		Total Supply	Total Demand	Adjusted Surplus/Deficiencies
		Public	Private/Patron			
2000	544	662	881	2,087	1,667	+420
1995	452	776	625	1,853	1,577	+276

A detailed breakdown of the parking supply adjustments is contained in the Appendix. A block-by-block distribution of the adjusted parking surplus/deficiency can be seen in Figure 4 for the Downtown Area and Figure 5 for the Haymarket Sub-Area. It is important to note the separate peak demand at 12:00 PM is used for the Haymarket Sub-Area adjusted parking surplus/deficiency.

*Figure 4-Downtown Adjusted Parking Surplus/Deficiency*

*Figure 5-Haymarket Sub-Area Adjusted Parking Surplus/Deficiency*

### ***Parking Demand By Destination***

Figure 4 reflects where persons currently park, not where they would like to park. In order to better identify the destinations of parkers in the Downtown area, without interviewing each parker, the Downtown employment and occupied commercial floor areas by block were used. The employment and occupied commercial floor areas within their boundaries were surveyed and provided by the Downtown Lincoln Association (DLA). Occupied commercial floor areas not included within the DLA's survey were obtained through the Lancaster County Assessor. Employment data not provided was determined using DLA provided data for similar land uses. It is important to note that data outside of DLA's boundaries were not included in previous studies. This, along with the expanded study boundaries and redevelopment, resulted in an increase in both Downtown employment and occupied commercial floor areas.

Employment in the Downtown Area has increased by 709 employees since the 1993 study. There were 22,724 employees in 1993 compared to 23,433 in 2000. Similarly, occupied commercial floor areas have increased by 1,779,505 ft<sup>2</sup>. In 1993 there were 8,375,000 ft<sup>2</sup> occupied compared to 10,154,505 ft<sup>2</sup> occupied in 2000. A block-by-block inventory of the Downtown employees can be seen in Figure 6 and the occupied floor areas can be seen in Figure 7.

The peak parking demand of 15,710 vehicles was split between long term (70%) and short term (30%) demand based upon sample counts of on-street and off-street facilities. For the purposes of this study, long-term demand was defined as three hours or greater.

The long term parking demand was distributed block-by-block utilizing the employment per block, while the short-term demand was distributed utilizing the occupied floor area of retail, service, government, financial, insurance, transportation or utility land uses for each block. The split can be seen in Table 11 below.

**Table 11-Long-Term/Short-Term Split**

Time Parked	Vehicles
Long Term	10,997
Short Term	4,713
Totals	15,710

The detailed redistribution of the parking demand based on employment and occupied commercial floor areas is included in the Appendix and can be seen in Figure 8.



*Figure 6-Downtown Employment Distribution*

*Figure 7-Downtown Occupied Square Footage Distribution*

*Figure 8-Downtown Surplus/Deficiency By Destination*

## Future Parking Conditions

### ***Projected Redevelopment***

The previous sections of this report focused on conditions that were present during the fall of 2000 and spring of 2001. In order to provide a vision of future conditions (2007), adjustments need to be made to the supply and demand to account for future redevelopment projects.

There are some general redevelopment trends projected to occur in Downtown Lincoln. The first is the redevelopment of first floor space into restaurants and bars. This is occurring through conversion of both current office space and vacant spaces. This generally causes an increase in demand. There is also a projected increase in first floor retail square footage due to conversion of both office and vacant space. This would lead one to believe that there is an overall loss in office space. However, this is not the case. There is also a large conversion of vacant space to office space resulting in a gain of office square footage. Both of these changes result in an increase in demand.

A summary of general redevelopment can be seen in Table 12 below. A detailed description of the redevelopment can be found in the Appendix.

**Table 12-Future Redevelopment**

	Land Use (ft <sup>2</sup> )			Dwelling Units	Various
	Retail	Office	Restaurant/Bar		
Gain	154,865	336,320	142,505	119	N/A
Loss	41,741	220,570	11,596	0	N/A
Net Change	+113,124	+115,750	+130,909	+119	N/A
Change in Demand	+114	+232	+436	+119	+262

### ***Projected Parking Demand***

The future redevelopment was used to determine the effects on the Downtown parking supply. This is accomplished using the parking generation rates found in the Appendix. These rates were taken from the Lincoln Municipal code and information from past surveys.

After applying the rates over the next 5 years, it is projected that the Downtown parking demand would increase by 1,163 stalls. The Downtown parking supply is projected to increase by only 355 stalls. This results in a future parking stall surplus of 654 stalls. A summary of the changes can be seen in Table 13. A block-by-block distribution of the projected parking conditions can be seen in Figure 9 and in the Appendix.

**Table 13-Changes in Adjusted Parking Supply**

	Adjusted Supply	Total Demand	Adjusted Surplus/Deficiency
2000	17,172	15,710	1,462
Net Change	+355	+1,163	-808
2007	17,527	16,873	654

*Figure 9-2007 Downtown Projected Parking Surplus/Deficiency*

## **UNL Study Area**

The UNL Study Area consists of both UNL reserved lots located on the City Campus and non-UNL parking in the vicinity of the City Campus. The non-UNL parking consists of both on-street (City of Lincoln owned stalls) and privately owned lots. The UNL study area can be seen in Figure 10.

## ***Parking Inventory***

A survey of these stalls was taken by ITE to provide a current inventory. These results are summarized in Table 14 and a detailed breakdown can be found in the Appendix.

**Table 14-UNL Study Area Parking Inventory**

Type of Parking	Number of Stalls
UNL	9,887
City/Private	1,578
Total Stalls	11,465

## ***Existing Parking Demand***

The parking occupancies were measured at 3 separate times by ITE. The results are summarized in Table 15. A detailed breakdown can be found in the Appendix.

**Table 15-UNL Study Area Parking Occupancy**

Parking Type	Total Number of Occupied Stalls		
	10:00 AM	12:00 PM	2:00 PM
UNL	7,840	8,230	7,506
City/Private	1,042	1,032	952
Total	8,883	9,262	8,458

Table 15 shows the peak parking demand on campus to be 12:00 Noon, with 9,262 vehicles observed parked within the UNL Study Area.

Although Table 15 shows a surplus in parking, these spaces are not necessarily available for all users. In many of the lots, a specific type of permit is required. It is possible that some lots are at capacity while others have available parking. Discussions with UNL parking staff indicated that there was a deficiency of over 900 stalls (waiting list) for commuter students wishing to park on campus at the time of this study (Fall 2000).

In addition to the 3 time periods surveyed above, a specialized study was done in the area generally northwest of the University campus. In addition to the times above, this area was surveyed at 4:00 AM. This was done to determine the demand that University parkers place on residential streets in the vicinity of the University. The results can be found in Table 17 of the Appendix.

*Figure 10-UNL Study Area*



### **UNL Adjusted Parking Supply**

Although a parking permit is required to park on the UNL City Campus, it is unreasonable to assume the capacity is 100%. Therefore, a capacity of 90% was assumed for both UNL parking and City/Private parking. The adjusted supply can be seen in Table 16.

**Table 16-UNL Adjusted Parking Supply**

Type of Parking	Actual Parking Supply	Adjusted Parking Supply
UNL	9,887	8,898
City/Private	1,578	1,420
Totals	11,465	10,318

As mentioned before the current unmet UNL demand is 900 parkers according to the waiting list. It is reasonable to assume that these parkers and possibly parkers that would like UNL provided parking, but are not on the waiting list, utilize the City/Private parking. Therefore, the peak parking demand of 9,262 parkers was compared to the UNL provided adjusted parking supply of 8,898 spaces. This shows that there is a deficiency of 364 spaces.

### **Future UNL Demand**

It is necessary to take into account future changes within the UNL Study Area in order to project the University's effect on the Downtown Study Area's future parking supply and demand. Table 17 shows the projected surplus or deficiency at various points in the future. A detailed breakdown of changes in the UNL Study Area's supply can be found in the Appendix.

**Table 17-UNL Projected Surplus/Deficiency**

Change	Projected Effective Date	Projected Surplus (+) / Deficiency (-)
Opening of 17 <sup>th</sup> & "R" St. Garage	August, 2001	+693
Antelope Valley Project Begins	2003	-812
Various Campus Building Projects	2004	-2686

The University Parking Master Plan and the Campus Master Plan show major parking facilities at 14<sup>th</sup> and Avery Avenue and 19<sup>th</sup> and Vine Streets. The construction phasing for these facilities is subject to the approval of the University of Nebraska Board of Regents.

## **Conclusions**

1. The raw parking supply in Downtown Lincoln has increased from 20,001 to 22,423 spaces since 1993, an increase of 2,422 spaces. The peak parking demand has increased from 15,323 parkers to 15,710 in the same time period, or 387 parkers. Thus, the net availability of parking in Downtown Lincoln has increased by approximately 2,000 spaces.
2. The adjusted parking supply has increased from 15,744 spaces to 17,172 resulting in a net availability for the public of 1,462 spaces vs. 421 spaces in 1993. Thus, the net available parking for the general public has increased by approximately 1,040 spaces.
3. The Haymarket Area has seen a proportional increase in both supply and demand with the net available parking for the general public increasing by 144 spaces.
4. The increases in supply were primarily due to public garage construction, which more than offset the loss of surface lots due to building construction.
5. The peak demand is projected to increase by 1,163 parkers over the next 6 years while the parking supply is projected to increase by 355 spaces, not including the new UNL garage nor the new Haymarket Garage.
6. With the opening of the new UNL Garage in August of 2001, the UNL parking supply is projected to satisfy the campus parking demand until such time as surface lots are closed for the Antelope Valley Project or campus building construction.

## **Recommendations**

1. It is recommended that the City move forward with construction of an 400-425 space parking facility on the west side of 9<sup>th</sup> Street between “Q” and “R” Streets. (Figure 11)
2. It is recommended that the City and UNL work together in the short-term to identify potential parkers, such as Federal Building Employees, from the City waiting lists for the Que Place and University Square garages. If projections hold true for the fall of 2001, UNL should have surplus parking in their new facility until such time as surface lots close due to the Antelope Valley land acquisition and construction.
3. The meter time limits adjacent to the UNL/Downtown boundary should be examined establishing a maximum time limit of 90 minutes. This is intended to shift parkers of two hours or greater into off-street facilities, particularly the new UNL garage. This should free up prime on-street spaces for shorter term parkers completing errands, business transactions, making a purchase, or eating a meal.
4. It is recommended that the usage of fringe meters with a time limit greater than two hours be reviewed for a potential reduction in rates to attract parkers from adjacent core areas having high occupancies.
5. The above recommendations should free up sufficient space to accommodate the daytime demands for the new retail/entertainment block. A sub-area study, including night-time demand is needed to verify this after a development plan is determined.
6. The eastern edge of downtown should be planned for a major parking garage. The existing shortages around the Federal Building, Pershing Auditorium, State Capitol, and State Office Building should be addressed as well as the potential parking demands of any Antelope Valley redevelopment in this area.
7. If vacancies continue, it is recommended that the monthly parking rates in the Carriage Park and Market Place Garages be adjusted to attract parkers from the areas adjacent to the garages.
8. A sub-area study is needed before construction of a parking garage is proposed on the block north of the County-City Building to satisfy existing identified County-City needs. Other area needs such as a potential convention center site also need to be considered.

*Figure 11-Proposed Haymarket Garage Site*

9. After the new convention facility (Pershing replacement) is tentatively sited, the daytime parking demand should be studied and overlaid on the projected surplus/deficiencies of this study (Figure 9) to arrive at the daytime demand with a convention center. A similar evaluation needs to be done for evening/weekend demand.
10. It is recommended that the land acquisition and construction for Antelope Valley be closely monitored along the east boundary of the UNL campus. The potential loss of a significant number of parking spaces in this area should trigger construction of the 14<sup>th</sup> and Avery parking facility.

## **Parking Survey of Downtown Lincoln Employers**

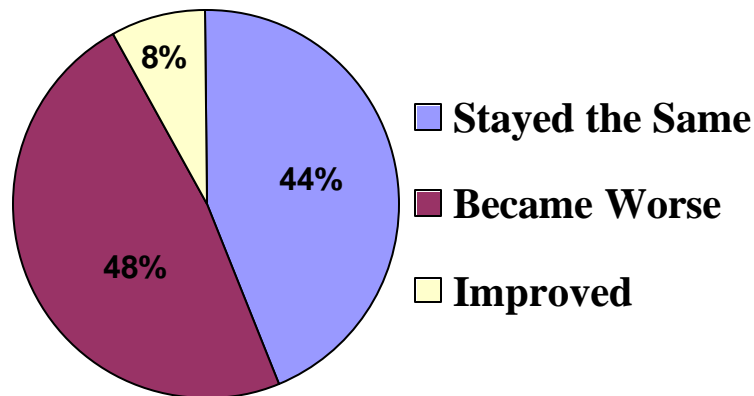
All businesses with employees located in the Downtown BID were surveyed by DLA. There are currently 943 businesses or organizations residing in downtown Lincoln. This does not include 33 agencies in the State Office Building, 46 agencies in the Federal Building, agencies in the County-City Building, and agencies in the State Capitol.

There are 22,139 employees in downtown. This includes businesses, organizations, and government agencies. Of the 22,139 employees, 17,285 are full-time and 4,817 are part-time. The part-time workers average 20.8 hours per week.

Of the 943 businesses or organizations surveyed, 668 (71%) responded to some or all of the opinion questions in the survey. The following section provides a summary of some of the findings.

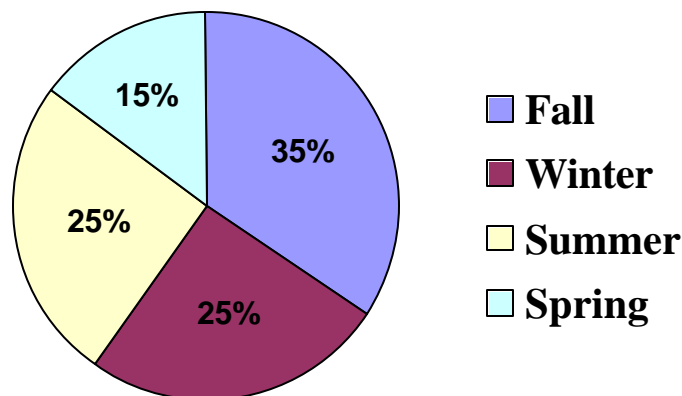
### ***Parking Situation***

**Do you feel that parking has improved, stayed the same, or became worse?**



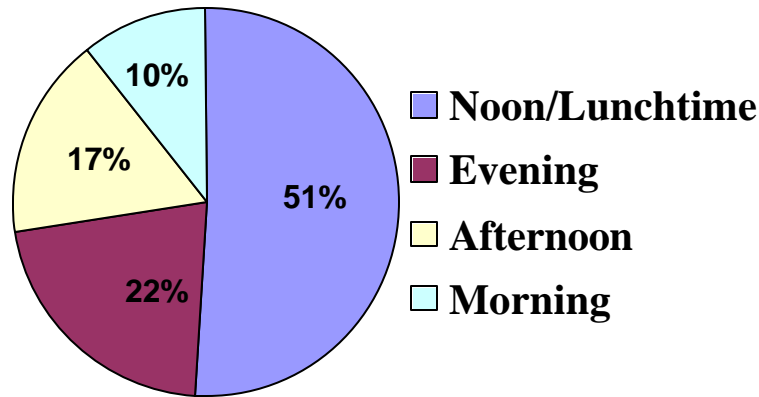
### ***Peak Time Of Year***

**What is the peak time of year for your business?**



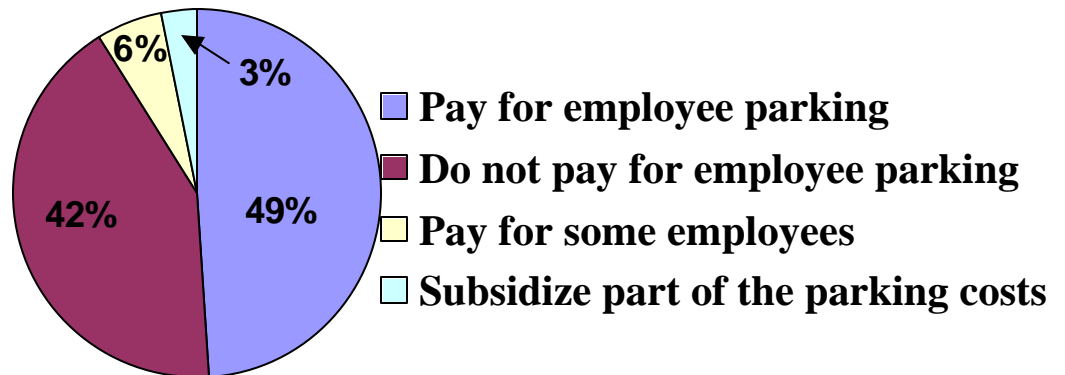
### ***Peak Time Of Day***

What is the peak time of day for your business?

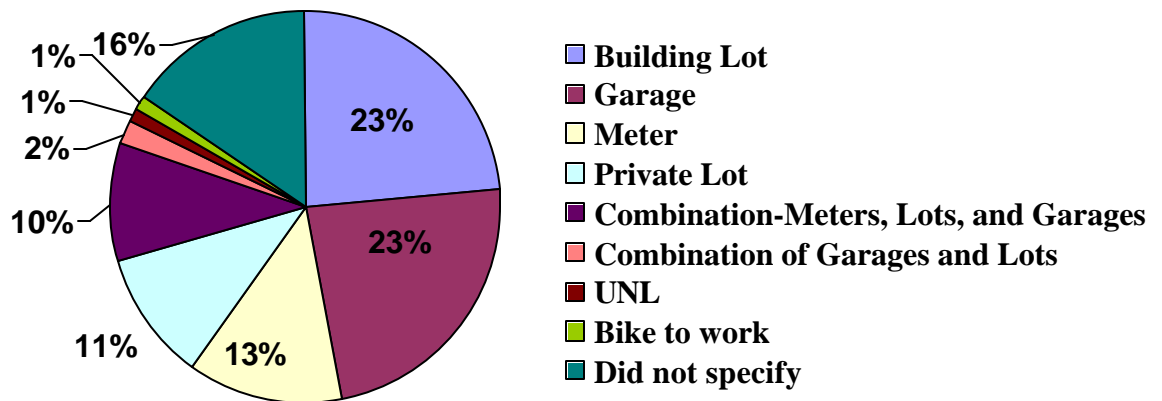


### ***Paying For Parking***

Do you pay for parking for your employees?

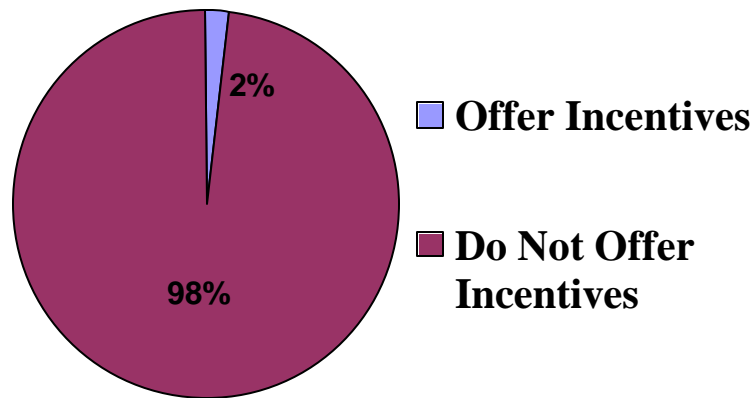


Where do your employees tend to park?



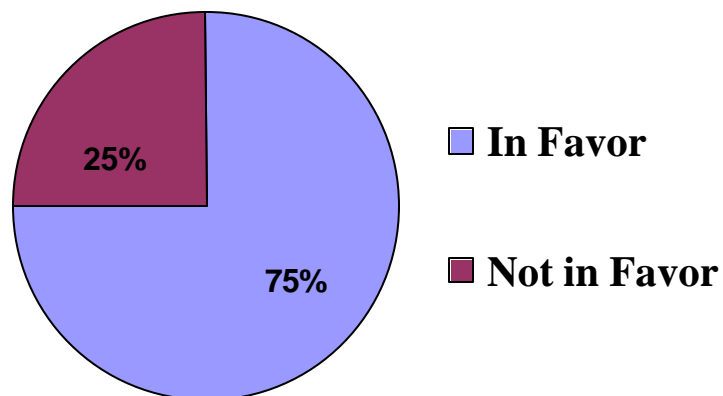
### ***Incentives***

**Do you offer transportation incentives to your employees (i.e. incentives to carpool, ride the bus, or walk)?**



### ***Shuttle***

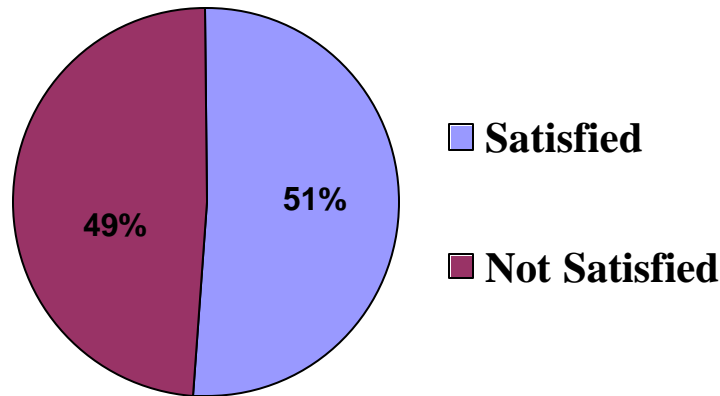
**Would you be in favor of having a downtown shuttle?**



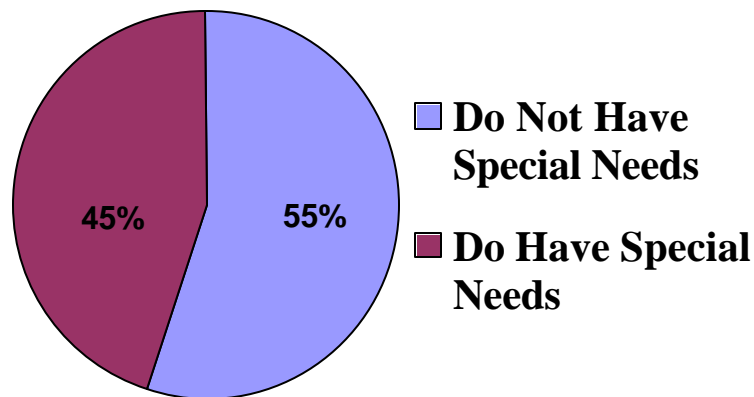


### ***Meter Needs***

**Are you satisfied with the parking meter time limits in front or around your business?**



**Do you have any special parking meter needs near your business (i.e. 10-min. or 30-min. meters)?**



### ***Responses***

- ☐ 46% Would like longer meters, most preferred longer than 2 hours
- ☐ 14% Would like more meters in the downtown area
- ☐ 11% Thought the cost of meters was too expensive
- ☐ 6% Would like more 2-hour meters
- ☐ 4% Would like more short-term meters near their business
- ☐ 3% Would like more 1-hour meters
- ☐ 3% Would like more 10-minute to 30-minute meters
- ☐ 3% Would like more 90-minute meters
- ☐ 1% Feel many of the meters do not work properly
- ☐ 1% Feel more handicapped spaces are needed
- ☐ 12% Did not specify the need
- ☐ Various (more violations issued, less violations issued, handicapped signage not clear, meters should take nickels)

### ***Additional Comments***

- ☐ 11% Thought the meter rates were too expensive